

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

DANNY MCCOY,

No. C-12-3874 TEH (PR)

Plaintiff,

v.

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

MATTHEW ANDERSON,

Defendant.

DANNY MCCOY,

No. C-12-3875 TEH (PR)

Plaintiff,

v.

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

IAN WONG,

Defendant.

Plaintiff Danny McCoy, an inmate at Lompoc Federal Prison located in Lompoc, California, has filed two pro se complaints under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. In case number C 12-3875 TEH, Plaintiff alleges that, on February 3, 2009, El Cerrito Police Officer Ian Wong unlawfully detained and searched him, unlawfully seized items and falsified his police report regarding the incident. In case number C 12-3874 TEH, Plaintiff alleges that, on February 28, 2009, Richmond Police Officer Matthew Anderson unlawfully searched and arrested him, unlawfully seized items and falsified his police report regarding the search and seizure. Plaintiff alleges that

1 both Defendants violated his constitutional rights and seeks
2 damages. Doc. #1.

3 The Court takes judicial notice that on November 19, 2010,
4 Plaintiff was convicted by a jury of possession of cocaine base with
5 intent to distribute in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and
6 841(b)(1)(B)(iii) and possession of a firearm and ammunition by a
7 felon in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1). See United States v.
8 McCoy, CR 09-0337-CW (Crim. Case), Docket #246. Plaintiff's
9 eventual trial and conviction on charges stemming from his
10 encounters with Defendants requires that the action be dismissed
11 because the conviction renders Plaintiff's § 1983 claims not
12 cognizable under Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477 (1994).

13 I

14 Federal courts must engage in a preliminary screening of
15 cases in which prisoners seek redress from a governmental entity or
16 officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a).
17 The court must identify cognizable claims or dismiss the complaint,
18 or any portion of the complaint, if the complaint "is frivolous,
19 malicious, or fails to state a claim upon which relief may be
20 granted," or "seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune
21 from such relief." Id. § 1915A(b). Pleadings filed by pro se
22 litigants, however, must be liberally construed. Balistreri v.
23 Pacifica Police Dep't., 901 F.2d 696, 699 (9th Cir. 1990).

24 To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must
25 allege two essential elements: (1) that a right secured by the
26 Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) that
27 the alleged violation was committed by a person acting under the
28

1 color of state law. West v. Atkins, 487 U.S. 42, 48 (1988).

2 II

3 To recover damages for an allegedly unconstitutional
4 conviction or prison sentence, or for other harm caused by actions
5 whose unlawfulness would render a conviction or sentence invalid, a
6 plaintiff in a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action must prove that the
7 conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal, expunged
8 by executive order, declared invalid by a state tribunal authorized
9 to make such determination, or called into question by a federal
10 court's issuance of a writ of habeas corpus. Heck, 512 U.S. at
11 486-87. A claim for damages bearing that relationship to a
12 conviction or sentence that has not been so invalidated is not
13 cognizable under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. Id. at 487.

14 In Plaintiff's criminal case, he was charged, in a
15 superceding indictment, with four counts: (1) possession with intent
16 to distribute a controlled substance, namely, cocaine base, on
17 February 3, 2009; (2) possession with intent to distribute a
18 controlled substance, namely, methodone pills, on February 28, 2009;
19 (3) possession of a firearm in relation to a drug trafficking crime
20 on February 28, 2009; and (4) possession of a firearm and ammunition
21 by a felon on February 28, 2009. Crim. Case, Docket #38. Plaintiff
22 moved to suppress on the ground that the searches and seizures by
23 Officers Wong and Anderson were unconstitutional and, after an
24 evidentiary hearing, the Court denied the motion. Crim. Case Docket
25 #63. Plaintiff was tried by a jury which found him guilty on counts
26 one and four. Crim. Case Docket #246. Plaintiff appealed to the
27 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals which affirmed the conviction. Crim.

Case Docket #308.¹


The cocaine base upon which count one is predicated was seized incident to the search initiated by Defendant Wong on February 3, 2009, and the firearm upon which count four is predicated was seized incident to the search initiated by Defendant Anderson on February 28, 2009. A determination in Plaintiff's civil cases that the searches and seizures were unlawful would impermissibly imply that his conviction is invalid. See Whitaker v. Garcetti, 486 F.3d 572, 583-84 (9th Cir. 2007) (Heck bars suit for damages attributable to allegedly unreasonable search that produced evidence introduced in criminal trial resulting in plaintiff's conviction). Therefore, Plaintiff's claims against Defendants Wong and Anderson are barred under the rationale of Heck.

III

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff's complaints are dismissed under the rationale of Heck for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). The Clerk shall close the files.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

DATED 08/29/2012



THELTON E. HENDERSON
United States District Judge

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¹The Ninth Circuit vacated Petitioner's sentence and remanded to the district court for re-sentencing on grounds that are not relevant to this Order.